



AGES AND STAGES: The Sandwich Generation

call explained balancing work and family is the key, and that her employer has provided this WorkLife service to support these very needs. As Americans live longer, the number of people raising their children and caring for parents has increased significantly. In fact, some experts call these individuals the "sandwich generation," because they fall between a generation before and after, and provide care for both. The counselor went on to explain finding balance becomes easier with child care and parenting resources, elder care assistance, alternative work options, financial assistance, and resources for self-care. Cherise learned that by implementing some of these tools, she could find time for herself and enjoy her family again. She felt better just knowing about available options, and was excited to begin. The Counselor asked her questions about her work situation, current care options for her daughter and mother, the area where they live, their lifestyle, health histories, support networks, and finances.

RESEARCH, CONSULTATION, SOLUTIONS

Research revealed time and a weak support network were Cherise's most significant issues. The Counselor assisted her by linking Cherise with resources for Big Sisters so her daughter could spend one night a week, either in their home or doing a fun activity elsewhere, with a pre-screened female volunteer who would provide her with some special attention. Cherise could finally have one night to herself. A list of in-home elder care assistance options was also provided to Cherise. With the list and some suggestions on how to communicate with an elder family member, she was able to review and select an option with her mother. "By making the choice together, we both feel comfortable she will be happy with the services and the person who will be providing in-home care twice a week. This allows me the time for things I wasn't able to attend to before, including myself," Cherise stated.

With the Counselor's guidance, Cherise opted to speak to her employer about her situation and how beneficial a flexed schedule would be. They agreed she would work four nine hour days and one four hour day every week. She used the free afternoon of the one work day to catch up on things she didn't have time for before.

MEETING EVERY CALLER'S UNIQUE NEEDS

When the Horizon Health Counselor followed up with Cherise several weeks later, she reminded her of the additional child care, elder care, and financial services that might benefit her in the future if she felt she needed them. "Even though I still have a lot of responsibility, making these few changes has allowed me enough time for myself - so I don't feel so overwhelmed anymore. Now I can truly enjoy the time I spend with my family."

Note: Case studies are composites of real situations. All names and other identifying information are fictional.

CONNECTING PEOPLE... CHANGING LIVES

Case Study

"The demands of raising my daughter alone and assisting my diabetic mother with her day-to-day needs are exhausting me. I feel like I don't have time to take care of myself and that my negative mood is impacting my job and home life. It's all I can do to get through a single day. How can I get some help?"

Cherise added her own health was suffering and her daughter was acting out, because she wasn't able to give her the attention she needed.

CARING, EXPERIENCE, REASSURANCE

The Horizon Health counselor who took Cherise's



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